

Message Text

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P 152053Z JUN 78
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY ANTANANARIVO PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 152709

STADIS/////////////////
LIMDIS

E.O. 11652:GDS

TAGS:PDIP, MA, US

SUBJECT:NORMALIZING RELATIONS WITH MADAGASCAR

REF: A) 77 ANT 2158 B) 77 ANT 2206 C) ANT 263 D) ANT 599
E) ANT 837 F) 77 ANT 2317 G) ANT 599

I. THERE IS A GROWING FEELING HERE THAT THE TIME MAY HAVE
ARRIVED FOR US TO RELAX OUR PREVIOUSLY RIGID STANCE TOWARD
MADAGASCAR. FOR THE PAST TWO YEARS WE HAVE INSISTED THAT
SOME INITIATIVE BE TAKEN BY THE GDRM TO MOVE ON THE ISSUES
DIVIDING US, PARTICULARLY THE NASA ISSUE, AS A PRE-
REQUISITE TO IMPROVING BILATERAL RELATIONS. WE NOW
WONDER, PARTICULARLY IN VIEW OF REF E., WHETHER THIS
POSTURE HAS NOT BECOME A LIABILITY TO OUR EFFORTS FOR A
SATISFACTORY RESOLUTION OF THESE OUTSTANDING ISSUES AND
WHETHER, IN ANY CASE, IT ISN'T RATHER PETTY FOR A COUNTRY
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OF OUR SIZE TO REQUIRE A COUNTRY OF MADAGASCAR'S SIZE TO
TAKE THE FIRST STEP. FURTHERMORE, THERE IS SOME CONCERN
THAT OUR STANCE LESSENS OUR ABILITY TO PLAY A BALANC-
ING ROLE VIS-A-VIS THE SOVIETS, WHO MIGHT PRESS THEIR
ADVANTAGE, AT SOME POINT IN THE FUTURE, TO OBTAIN A BASE
AT DIEGO SUAREZ.

2. ACCORDINGLY, DEPARTMENT IS CONSIDERING SEVERAL POSSIBLE APPROACHES TO NORMALIZATION, AND WOULD APPRECIATE YOUR COMMENTS ASAP. OUR OPTIONS MIGHT INCLUDE:

-- UNILATERALLY TAKING A FIRST STEP, WHICH LOGICALLY WOULD BE A REQUEST FOR AGREEMENT FOR A NEW AMBASSADOR. THIS WOULD GIVE THE CLEAREST POSSIBLE SIGNAL OF OUR DESIRE TO NORMALIZE THE RELATIONSHIP.

-- INSTRUCTING YOU TO EXPLORE AT THE HIGHEST ACCESSIBLE LEVEL A "PACKAGE DEAL" APPROACH TO NORMALIZATION, WHICH WOULD ENTAIL RECIPROCAL POSTING OF AMBASSADORS AND MUTUAL UNDERTAKINGS TO RENEW GOOD FAITH NEGOTIATION OF OUTSTANDING PROBLEMS (NOTABLY THE NASA ISSUE), AND WOULD OPEN THE POSSIBILITY OF OTHER RELATIONSHIPS, FOR EXAMPLE IN THE AID OR PL 480 FIELD.

-- INITIATING A SIMILAR APPROACH BY MEANS OF A PRESIDENTIAL LETTER TO PRESIDENT RATSIRAKA, WHICH YOU WOULD BE INSTRUCTED TO DELIVER, TO RATSIRAKA HIMSELF IF POSSIBLE. WHILE RISKIER, THIS TACK WOULD SEEM TO OFFER MAXIMUM PROSPECT OF SOOTHING RATSIRAKA'S OLD WOUND AND OBTAINING A POSITIVE RESPONSE.

3. DEPARTMENT IS CONSIDERING A FIRST SIGNAL OF OUR INTENTIONS IN THE FORM OF A SIGNIFICANTLY WARMER NATIONAL CONFIDENTIAL

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DAY MESSAGE THAN THAT SENT LAST YEAR. YOUR VIEWS ARE NEEDED SOONEST.

CHRISTOPHER

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